

News Release

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Release No. 1517.98

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FSA, OSHA SIGN AGREEMENT ON INFORMATION SHARING

WASHINGTON, July 01, 1998--The Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) have agreed on procedures for FSA personnel to share information and observations on conditions in federally licensed warehouses with OSHA's Regional Administrators. FSA Administrator Keith Kelly announced that the agencies have formalized their information sharing arrangement under a newly signed Memorandum of Understanding.

"Our responsibility is and continues to be the protection of depositors of grain from losses of quality and quantity," said Kelly. "But we are also committed to sharing any information that might help promote safety in these facilities. So notations of dust accumulation will be provided regularly to OSHA."

FSA is authorized to examine warehouses under the United States Warehouse Act to establish whether warehouse operators meet the terms and conditions of their obligations under that statute. Examiners make determinations whether warehouse operators are financially solvent and appropriately managed, and whether the assets being warehoused are adequately protected. FSA personnel do not engage in safety inspections.

During an examination, an FSA warehouse examiner may note conditions such as an accumulation of grain dust in a Memorandum of Adjustments that indicates that corrective action is needed to protect the product stored in the warehouse. The Memorandum of Adjustments is given to the warehouse operator so that corrective action can be initiated.

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With the agreement to forward information to OSHA in these situations, appropriate information contained in the Memorandum of Adjustments that note dust conditions will also be provided to the local OSHA Regional Administrator, in addition to the warehouse operators.

In fiscal year 1997, 58 FSA warehouse examiners examined 3,580 warehouses. The warehouses included those subject to federal licenses under the United States Warehouse Act, and non-federal warehouses subject to storage agreements with the Commodity Credit Corporation.

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